The present invention is a process to prepare a base oil having a target viscosity index of above 80 and a saturates content of above 90 wt% from a crude derived feedstock which comprises contacting the feedstock in the presence of hydrogen and a catalyst to produce an effluent and then adding to the effluent a Fischer-Tropsch derived fraction boiling at least partly in the base oil range wherein the Fischer-Tropsch derived fraction is obtained by hydroisomerization of a Fischer-Tropsch synthesis product. The process of this invention is advantageous for crude-derived feeds which are not suitable for preparing a base oil having the desired viscosity index such as those which have too high a content of polynuclear aromatics and naphthenics (page 2, lines 8-20, and page 4, lines 23-27, of the specification). It is possible that one may want to use the process of the present invention in other situations but this situation is the one in which it is most useful.

By the Examiner's own admission Bixel describes a process which is fully capable, without modification, of preparing a base oil having a target viscosity index of above 80. In fact, at page 8, lines 1-7, the reference states that the product produced has a viscosity index of 115 or higher. If the process of Bixel is capable of producing a product with such a high viscosity index, then why would anyone reviewing Bixel want to do anything but follow the teachings in the patent to produce a high viscosity index base oil much less look to Fischer-Tropsch art to find something to stick in the middle of the process? Adding a Fischer-Tropsch product in the middle of Bixel's process could only add to the cost of the final product for no reason since the process already produces a base oil with a high viscosity index. There is simply no reason that anyone reading Bixel would think that the ultimate product was unacceptable.

Germaine describes a Fischer-Tropsch derived fraction obtained by hydroisomerization which can be used to produce a base oil with a viscosity index higher than 120 (page 16, lines 3-5). Since the process of Germaine already is fully capable of producing a base oil with a high viscosity index, there is no reason why anyone would look elsewhere to produce the desired high viscosity index base oil. There is no suggestion in Germaine that the fraction should be added to a crude oil product to produce an ultimate product with a high viscosity index.

The Applicants assert that one of ordinary skill in the art would not even consider going beyond the disclosure of Bixel to find a process to produce a high viscosity index base oil since Bixel's process already produces a product with a viscosity index of 115. The same is true for the disclosure of Germaine. There is no reason to combine Germaine with Bixel. Therefore, the

Applicants assert that the rejection has been overcome and respectfully request an early notice of allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

PETER J. WARDLE and WILLIAM L. A. KING

By /Donald F. Haas/
Their Attorney, Donald F. Haas
Registration No. 26,177
(713) 241-3356

P. O. Box 2463
Houston, Texas 77252-2463